



# Socialism Lives in Czechoslovakia

## *Manifesto of the Socialist Movement of Czechoslovak Citizens*

Citizens of Czechoslovakia!

The representatives of Bohemia and Moravia met in Prague recently. They have re-affirmed the attitudes and ideas supported by the wide masses of people in 1968 and 1969 that were so unanimously manifested then and that today still live on in the minds of the people of Czechoslovakia, in altered or hidden forms perhaps, but in spite of official propaganda and notwithstanding the way people have to behave when at work.

The vast majority of our people in 1968 welcomed the fact that our society was endeavouring to give Socialism its true meaning, to combine freedom with democracy, to aim at a conception surpassing bourgeois definitions of Socialism and Stalinist interpretations, to develop the whole structure of civil rights, ensuring the legal rights and liberties of all citizens, creating a political and social system in which everybody would find his rightful place and be able to expand his ideals in a life based on happiness. We reject forms of Socialism that are bureaucratic, gulash type of Socialism, that cannot free Man from the sense of alienation that is both a malady of the East and the West. Those in power today in Czechoslovakia, through their own deeds and actions, have discarded the ideals set up by Socialism and are using socialist terminology to camouflage a bureaucratic dictatorship.

There is no need to organise a movement of resistance against this type of regime. The movement exists and will go on existing as everyone can see. It is supported by thousands of workers, both in the towns and the villages, by the intelligentsia, members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party who were or still are in the Party, members of other political parties in the National Front, people who are not members of any party, those working in the factories, scientific institutions, the state or political apparatus, in trade unions, youth movements, in the mass media, free professions, members of the Army and State Security, and those who the present regime has forced in tens of thousands to leave their posts.

Members of this movement are also those citizens who did not betray the common ideal by leaving Czechoslovakia after the August 1968 invasion and sought temporary asylum in other countries, either for fear of persecution and possible loss of work or so that they could continue to fight for the ideals of the post-January policies elsewhere. We refuse to brand them as traitors! They have chosen a way, out of their own free will, that was paved for them by thousands of others, throughout the centuries.

The real state our country is in is evident: there is a political, economic, ideological and moral crisis that can hardly be compared to any other period in our history.

SPOKESMAN PAMPHLET No. 10

Sixpence 2½ New Pence

Politically we have been robbed of our rights. The servile policy of our present regime endangers the very future of our nations and state entity. In spite of statements of an opposite nature and the futile attempts of some of our functionaries, our best people are being purged in all fields of work and science. The regime is annihilating our scientific institutions. It is silencing our culture. It has put our trade unions, youth organisations, women's organisations into fetters. It has liquidated the idea of workers' councils. It is returning the whole economic structure to the old system of centralization that in the past, more than once, has proved itself a failure. The present regime is not supported in its efforts by the much needed enthusiasm of the greater majority of the Czechoslovak people or the Czechoslovak intellectuals who in the nineteen fifties managed to compensate for the inadequacies of the state plan by correcting it, or the inefficiency of those who planned it and the authorities. The regime today talks of scientific and technical revolution at a time when it is purging its economy and scientific departments of fully qualified staff and specialists.

Into state, social, economic and administrative posts are today nominated people who have in the past been capable of little more than merely destroying existing values, people who were police informers. This potentially weak group of activists of the present regime considers itself to be the elite class which alone can provide all the solutions, can lead the country out of its present crisis. This so called elite is imposing the most primitive type of political, economic and ideological dictatorship, which is prevalent in the sphere of culture too.

This sort of development is not only a threat to the people of Czechoslovakia. The political line being followed by the present leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the Czechoslovak Government is seriously obstructing the continuation of a progressive development of the entire Eastern bloc. We are being forced into accepting a primitive type of dictatorship at a time when all the five states, which sent their armies to invade us, are themselves trying out methods and means of accelerating their progressive development or at least putting a brake on the development leading them to economic and political chaos. And at this moment we are not even mentioning the liberalisation struggle of the progressive groups and movements in the Socialist states that are demanding structural reforms and, most of all, democratic reforms that would help them overcome the Stalinist model of Socialism.

The Socialist movement of Czechoslovak citizens is leading a struggle for a Socialist, democratic, independent and free Czechoslovakia, a fully sovereign Czechoslovakia with full control of its internal and external policies. A Czechoslovakia that would be allowed to find its own way and means of development and progress and the fulfilment of the ideals and wishes of its citizens. We have not chosen at random the date 28 October to manifest our aims. For this day symbolizes the re-instatement of the Czechs and Slovaks into one state, on this day many years later the monopolies belonging to wealthy capitalists and landowners were nationalised, this day is the symbol of the establishing of a just political structure, the alliance of two nations with equal rights, the Czechs and Slovaks.

The existence of the Czechoslovak state has always in the past been seen as linked with other states. This idea has in the past been propagated in the foreign policies of the country. The existence of our nations and our state will always be dependent on the creating of better relations throughout the world between individual states and on the relaxing of international tensions, especially in Europe, on the basis of mutual co-operation and full sovereignty.

The biggest political issue in Europe at this time is the problem of the two German states. It can only be solved by recognising them as two independent, sovereign states, while their own mutual relations are decided upon by themselves. The latest political developments, especially the Soviet-West German treaty has proved that our foreign policies in 1968 were correct. We continue to be convinced that West Germany does not cradle only revanchist forces but that through the signing of a Czechoslovak-West German agreement relations between the two countries are possible, without Czechoslovakia having to abandon any of her basic principles. An understanding of this sort and the restoring of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the frontiers of which are at the same time the frontiers of two different political blocs, would greatly contribute to the easing of tension on the European scene and be a vital step towards the establishing of real peace throughout Europe.

The problem of our relations with the Soviet Union is of vital importance. The Soviet Union is our most powerful neighbour and a world power. It will be necessary to overcome the uncomprehending, negative and at times full of hate attitudes which are professed today, for obvious reasons, by the majority of our people towards the Soviet Union.

Czechoslovakia was not occupied by the Soviet people or by the nations of the Soviet Union. The present situation though was not created by us and we cannot change it by ourselves. The changes can only be effected by the present or future leadership of the USSR, if it recognises that the 21 August 1968, and its consequences, must be repudiated, if it realises that only a neighbour that does not see in the Soviet Union a danger to his own sovereignty, is of real value, a neighbour that sees in a relationship of this sort mutual respect and an alliance. We shall at all times continue to let the Soviet Union know that freedom and good relations with other countries cannot be enforced by military might and through the medium of people who have been compromised by their past, but only through : sovereign and truly free people who cannot and need not have other aims than the creation of such friendly relations and alliances, based on equality with other countries. Internationalism does not mean the sending of military forces of one or a group of countries into another country. Internationalism expresses the aim for equality and alliances based on equality, the uniting of modern, progressively minded states, socialist states, the uniting of movements, political parties, of all these without any exception. If the atomisation of progressive elements in the world is not to continue then it is necessary to move forward to a new type of internationalism, towards a unity of different opinions and attitudes. Those who enforce their ideas on others through the use of force are not bearers of progress.

The political set up in Europe today is still in the grips of the post-war division of it between two world political

blocs that both respect the existing status quo. This unilateral and dangerous policy of power blocs can be eliminated if the states of the Warsaw Treaty and the North Atlantic Treaty all get together and agree on a joint plan of action together with the non-aligned countries. Czechoslovakia's foreign policy should be based on this principle and should be supporting all measures leading towards this aim: bilateral and multi-lateral agreements on non-aggression and the renunciation of force, agreements on the creation of nuclear free zones and zones with only limited armament, zones in which the use of arms is forbidden altogether, especially in the area of frontiers between two power blocs, treaties dealing with the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the territory of another country.

While these sort of treaties are still in the making, or non-existent, Czechoslovakia can only accept the existing status quo and in this situation, which demands an active initiative of all states, Czechoslovakia's foreign policy remains practically non-existent.

All the lies and distorted information with which the present regime in Czechoslovakia is trying to prove to the people that our aims in 1968 were the over-throw of Socialism and a restoration of Capitalism, the linking of Czechoslovakia with the West European military bloc, only demonstrate the evil intentions of their authors and their inability to understand that the alternative to Capitalism is not only a bureaucratic form of Socialism but other more modern forms of Socialism. None of the other Communist Parties in Western Europe accept the idea of a monolithic type of Socialism. They are for a pluralistic system, a political partnership of different interest groups, acting with full autonomy and with no one's sponsorship.

The nationalisation of our industry was an important step of liberation in our history. It later became evident though that the nationalised property did not belong to the nation but to the state apparatus. It was not the property of the workers but of the state bureaucrats. It was not used to finance a government of the people but a bureaucratic regime.

Our aim is to fight for the true rights of the people, so that their property is handed back to their administration, workers' councils that would be elected by the people while the state, the true representative of the people would put into effect the interests of the whole society, through a direct price control system, investments, rates and tax policies.

The equal status of the Czechs and Slovaks was firmly anchored in the declaration of an independent Czechoslovakia on October 28, 1918. The new arrangement was greatly valued by both Czechs and Slovaks. The federal structure joining the two nations together at present is greatly endangered by the policy the CPCz is carrying out. The Stalinist model functions on the basis of one directive centre. Centralising tendencies which are once more apparent after the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in January 1970, are not as evident on the surface only because at the head of the Party is a man, long known for his struggle for the equality of both nations. The federation however loses its meaning because Czechoslovak politics are neither determined in Prague or Bratislava.

Our struggle is a political struggle and a positive one. Its methods are not the methods used by force or sabotage. We do not propagate the motto: "The worse, the better!" as official propagandists would have us do. Most of our work is done with enthusiasm and a sense of initiative. Our efforts are directed only by a sense of professional honour and human conscience, and it is only the very last stage that they are affected by material interests. A deliberate slowing down process or the sabotage of the economic process will not lead us out of our present critical situation, nor any hysterically organised campaigns that are supposed to solve the economic crisis. The issue at present is not how we work but what is happening to the results of our work, why these are being wasted.

Our country has been in need of economic reforms for the last ten years. In 1968 we did not have enough time to put them into effect and since then the necessity has greatly increased.

Our aim is not the division but the unity of our fellow citizens. The unity that was so symbolic of the year 1968 beyond dispute showed that an understanding among all men in our country is possible, that there is much more that unites us all than divides us. It is not a question of revenge, it is a question of creating conditions that would enable any decent and industrious man to live happily. The people we cannot agree with form only a small group. We shall fight for every man who wishes to lead a decent and free life in this country.

There are many people who have not given up and reject all the lies told to them, among them are those who have made this gathering possible. Many others, on the surface adapt themselves to the prevailing conditions so that they and their families may at least have a chance to live. The others are tired out by the long crisis and cynicism of present day politics. They seek asylum in their own homes, work within themselves, for their families — for these are the last values left to them. But they too realise that despair, apathy, cynicism, escapism into the privacy of their own homes are dangerous. By doing this they are reinforcing the lack of existence of even a small, humble aim, they are encouraging ideological and economic chaos, the false scheming of would be intellectual speculation, prophecies based on looking at the map of the Sino-Soviet frontiers, the accumulation of gossip escaping from parliamentary lobbies etc.

If there is any moral to be learned from the modern history of our country then it is this: the more we come to depend in hard times on the fact that our problems will somehow solve themselves in conjunction with the larger scale problems of Europe and the rest of the world, the more we are turned into mere passive reflections of some newly formed structures, created by world powers. The future of Czechoslovakia is firmly linked to the future of world development and it is only we and we alone who can decide to make use of certain situations, to fulfil our aims, to take full advantage of each chance we get.

No citizen of Czechoslovakia is excluded from any sort of action. Do not let us wait for a leadership to form, or leaders to emerge, if we do not want to, once again, succumb to the subjugation of power politics. Let us be tolerant, let us help the oppressed, let us not make things worse for those

we cannot save. Solidarity has always been our strongest weapon. Let us fight for every single thing, in the struggle that is going on at all levels, everywhere, in families, in our places of work, everywhere.

We are fully aware of what we want: it is a political Socialist system. A system in which there will exist a partnership built on equality between political and non-political organisations, a system in which there will be self-government both in communities and institutions, where there will be an institutionally anchored control of power, all the basic freedoms and freedom of religion, all the freedoms formulated in the Declaration of Human Rights, ratified by Czechoslovakia.

Our manifesto today wishes to help in this struggle. Let us distribute it through every possible channel. Let us work on the preparation of a new complex programme of action. Our basis for this will be the Action Programme of April 1968, the documents put forward at the 14th CCP Congress, discussions throughout the mass media on the structure of a political system, economic reforms, workers' councils etc., topics about which we were once wholly united. These ideas are not to be allowed to rest, they must be put forward again and again, compared with the changing face of the existing reality. They must be made to live again in private conversations and in public. The present day regime cannot abolish its party organisations, trade unions etc. It must be surrounded by a facade of assent. It is quite aware this is only a facade and though it can keep on replacing functionaries, it cannot expel all the members of the Party. The regime cannot go on waging a destructive war forever with the population. If it does not want to destroy itself it must go on to the formulation of a pseudo-constructive programme and cannot continually purge society of its best elements on a mass scale. This affords opportunities to everyone to propagate again within their own organisation ideals which are indestructible.

The present regime may propagate terror but it is a regime built on insecurity. It arrests people without any reason for it is in need of scapegoats. It has to establish their guilt and as this is difficult it holds them in prison for long periods of time. The regime has no arguments it can well use. Its only weapon are phrases that are supposed to convey truth but are totally outworn.

Because all the ties existing between the political system and the social structure crumbled in 1967, the present day regime cannot even turn to the pre-January policies for precedence. It managed to destroy the positive values and ideals of 1968 but it is forced to go on existing in their name. There is no better medicine it can prescribe for itself. The regime is incapable of determining the difference between the positive and negative values, these are determined by everyone of us, by those whose aim it is to continue to work in the name of these very ideals in our families, on a social level, in our working environments, in all the state organisations and within the state apparatus.

One of the most frequently formulated questions is whether we are optimists or pessimists about the future of our country. Gramsci wrote that optimism derives from one's will power.

If we wish to live in a Socialist, democratic, independent and free state, if we want to enjoy the right of self-determination and to search in our own way and on the basis of our own conditions, for the right model of Socialism and for such ways that can give the people of our country a happy life, if we want to believe that we shall see this happen still in our life-time, then we must act at once.

That is why our voice is to be heard today. The development of international events, the development going on within the Socialist camp, within the Soviet Union itself, in Europe and the whole world, offers to us another opportunity today that we must make full use of at once.

28 October 1970

Read this carefully, think about it and pass it on. In this way you too are acting.

## Spokesman Pamphlets

No. 1	A Strategy for the Left	Laurie Aarons	1/-
No. 2	The 'Cultural Revolution' in China	Isaac Deutscher	2/-
No. 3	The Communist Party of Australia: Draft Programme		1/6
No. 4	Vietnam: Three Documents of the NLF	Gabriel Kolko	1/6
No. 5	Two Essays on Cambodia	Noam Chomsky	4/-
No. 6	Bureaucracy and Technocracy in the Socialist Countries	Serge Mallet	2/-
No. 7	The Crisis in the Czechoslovak Communist Party	Interview with Czech Communist	2/-
No. 8	The Action Programme of the Czechoslovak Communist Party		3/-
No. 9	Oil, Oppression and Resistance in Iraq		2/-

A limited number of copies of back issues of THE SPOKESMAN and some numbers of the LONDON BULLETIN are still available at 8/- a copy.

Obtainable from BRPF Publications, Bertrand Russell House, 45 Gamble Street, Forest Road West, Nottingham NG7 4ET.